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Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child
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Summary record of the 2145th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 21 September 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Mezmur

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

Third and fourth combined periodic reports of Saudi Arabia (CRC/C/SAU/3-4; CRC/C/SAU/Q/3-4 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Saudi Arabia took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Al-Aiban** (Saudi Arabia) said that, although the Committee members had raised a number of genuine concerns relating to the situation of children in the State party, the information on which they had based their questions was not necessarily reliable. The Committee members were welcome to visit Saudi Arabia to verify the conditions prevailing in the country.

3. In the light of the various resolutions of the Security Council of the United Nations relating to the situation in Yemen, the escalation of the conflict in that country by the Houthi rebels and the consequent threat to regional peace and security, and in response to a request by the legitimate President of Yemen, who had been ousted by the Houthi rebels, the Saudi Arabia-led coalition had intervened in the country in order to restore order. The coalition fully respected the rights of the child and international humanitarian and human rights law when planning military operations; it did its utmost to limit the impact of its actions on civilians and had adopted strict rules of engagement, which included, among other things, the study, identification and verification of potential military targets to ensure minimal error and to avoid bombing places of worship and locations where civilians gathered. The offices of international organizations and NGOs and historical sites had been placed on a regularly updated list of protected locations, which had been disseminated to all coalition forces. Advice was sought from experts in international humanitarian law when selecting military targets. Prior to carrying out air strikes, the coalition dropped leaflets warning the civilian population in the target areas of imminent action.

4. An independent expert group had been set up to investigate allegations of attacks on civilian sites and had released its findings to the international media. The Saudi Arabia-led coalition had been removed from the section on parties in Yemen of Annex I of the 2016 annual report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on children and armed conflict. A humanitarian assistance and evacuation unit had been set up to carry out humanitarian operations in Yemen and to liaise with international and governmental bodies in that regard. The unit had restored medical services disrupted by the forces opposing the legitimate President of Yemen. The coalition and the legitimate Government of Yemen kept in touch with all international humanitarian organizations operating in Yemen to ensure that aid workers were not caught up in military actions.

5. Through the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, Saudi Arabia provided financial assistance, food and health care, education and psychological rehabilitation services to around 4 million Yemeni children. The Centre had donated US$ 29.6 million to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), to pay for vaccination campaigns, the provision of clean water and assistance for pregnant women in Yemen, and US$ 145.4 million to the World Food Programme (WFP), to assist 2 million beneficiaries in Yemen, including 1.3 million children. In addition, the Centre assisted persons across Yemen, regardless of whether they lived in rebel or government-controlled areas; it had also provided funding for the vaccination of 3.8 million women and 3.4 million minors under the age of 18 years and had donated US$ 5.8 million to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to assist women and children, around US$ 42 million to Djibouti and Somalia and US$ 2.5 million to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for

projects targeting children. Over US$ 1.6 billion had been spent on providing free education for more than 285,000 Yemeni schoolchildren resident in Saudi Arabia.

6. Slavery had been abolished in Saudi Arabia and Ms. Aho Assouma's assertions in that regard were incorrect. Any person practising slavery faced severe penalties. Perpetrators of offences of trafficking in persons could be imprisoned for up to 15 years and fined 1 million Saudi Arabian riyals, with that sum being increased to 10 million Saudi Arabian riyals in the case of companies carrying out trafficking in persons. Saudi Arabia was party to a wide range of international human rights instruments, including the Slavery Convention, the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) of the International Labour Organization, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

7. As to the alleged mistreatment of domestic workers, visas were no longer issued to women under the age of 21 years wishing to engage in domestic work in the State party. An independent agency set up within the Ministry of Social Affairs was responsible for ensuring the welfare of domestic workers and the payment of their wages was covered by stringent regulations. All government ministries had put in place safeguards against trafficking in persons and made provision for financial, medical and psychological assistance for victims of that offence. As far as the position of Saudi Arabia regarding the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees was concerned, the national authorities were continuously reviewing and assessing all human rights instruments.

8. Saudi Arabia occupied third place in the global rankings of humanitarian assistance donors, provided support to over 95 Muslim and non-Muslim developing countries worldwide. It had donated US$ 139 billion in development assistance over the past four decades, far exceeding the United Nations Millennium Project target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) in that regard, and would donate an additional US$ 75 million to efforts to assist refugees. In addition, Saudi Arabia was one of the main donors to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross and had, on occasions, provided up to US$ 80 million in extrabudgetary contributions for United Nations development work. The State party also supported UNICEF crisis-response work, in particular with regard to Pakistan and Palestine, and had provided an additional US$ 500,000 to the Fund since 2007. Saudi Arabia had contributed US$ 20 million to the Emergency Fund of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), US$ 5 million to a UNESCO-run programme promoting dialogue and US$ 37 million to a number of other development programmes.

9. Donations were carefully monitored to ensure that they were not used improperly. The national authorities were closely following developments at the international level with regard to the fight against the online sexual exploitation of children and child pornography and intended to launch a campaign and host a conference on that theme in the near future.

10. Saudi Arabia not only played host to child refugees and their families but also supported refugee-assistance programmes in other countries. A number of nationals of Myanmar had been granted Saudi Arabian residency permits and enjoyed access to free education and medical services and job opportunities. The Government encouraged local employers to recruit nationals of Myanmar and to afford them equal treatment. Over 200,000 persons benefited from those measures and Saudi Arabia had been congratulated on its efforts in that regard by UNHCR. Since the beginning of the crisis in Syria, more than 2.5 million Syrian refugees had entered Saudi Arabia. Those who had remained had been issued work and residency permits and enjoyed freedom of movement and access to free education and medical services. In total, 141,000 Syrian students were currently studying in the State party at all levels of the education system. Working in conjunction

with a large number of international organizations, the national authorities had put in place social reinsertion programmes for child refugees.

11. The Government was equally generous in its treatment of Saudi Arabian children and had sought to tackle the causes and consequences of poverty through a series of national social development strategies based on respect for human rights, sustainable development and non-discrimination. The General Directorate of Statistics carried out studies in order to link national policies on education, development and the eradication of poverty. A number of measures had been taken to create economic opportunities for youth, in particular the preparation of the "Vision 2030" project. A national development programme had been launched to combat and eradicate poverty and to identify and assist groups of economically disadvantaged persons.

12. **Mr. Almdimegh** (Saudi Arabia) said that a number of national plans and strategies had been implemented as a matter of urgency to tackle poverty, raise the incomes of poor families and individuals and complement existing government programmes. Services for persons with disabilities had been strengthened, as had foster and alternative care programmes. In total, 1.2 billion Saudi Arabian riyals had been set aside for social programmes and social security spending had been increased. Programmes offering assistance relating to school uniforms and utility bills had been launched. A minimum wage had been introduced for all employees.

13. **Ms. Alosaimi** (Saudi Arabia) said that UNICEF had praised Saudi Arabian efforts to improve child health, provide significant funding in that regard, prevent the spread of communicable diseases and initiate a national dialogue on the issue of AIDS. The infant mortality rate had been cut in the State party. Compulsory vaccination programmes covered nearly 100 per cent of children. Polio had been eliminated in Saudi Arabia. The World Health Organization (WHO) had singled out the State party as being one of the countries with the lowest AIDS prevalence rates, in particular among minors under 15 years of age. A centre providing care, treatment, prevention, awareness-raising and counselling services relating to AIDS had been set up as a part of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Campaigns highlighting safe sex and the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV had been run. Voluntary screening for HIV/AIDS was available. All cases of ill-treatment of children were registered in the national medical records.

14. Pursuant to the Child Protection Act, the birth of a child must be registered. Every child had the right to a name and the name must not humiliate the child or violate the principles of Islam. A time frame of 15 days was allowed in which to register the child's birth or 30 days for those children born at a distance of 50 kilometres or more from the closest birth registry office. A fine was imposed if the parents did not register their child's birth within the allotted time frame.

15. The Government was taking steps to promote the practice of breastfeeding. Twenty-nine hospitals had been certified as child-friendly. In accordance with a ministerial decree, a programme had been approved to prohibit the promotion of milk supplements in public institutions. National campaigns had also been launched to encourage breastfeeding.

16. **Mr. Alotaibi** (Saudi Arabia) said that legislative and executive positive discrimination measures were in place in order to protect the rights of children with disabilities. Such measures aimed to ensure equality of opportunity and the integration of such children within society. Periodic stipends were provided for persons with disabilities and for families that fostered children with disabilities, for whom visual and auditory aids, prosthetic devices and any necessary medical equipment were made available. Transport fees were also considerably subsidized for such persons. Pursuant to a government decision of 2010, the State paid for the issuance and renewal of residence permits for non-nationals

with disabilities. Awareness-raising programmes had been launched with the cooperation of a number of government ministries in order to eliminate negative stereotypes and the stigmatization of persons with disabilities. Moreover, national programmes had been developed to assist children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and children with autism.

17. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** (Country Task Force) said that he had noted that 29 hospitals had been certified as excellent in terms of child care. He wondered what proportion that constituted out of the total number of hospitals in the State party.

18. **Ms. Sandberg** (Country Task Force) said that she would like to know how the State party promoted birth registration for parents who had missed the deadline. She noted that imposing a fine on such parents would not encourage them to come forward to register the birth of their child. She would also appreciate information on the challenges that the delegation had encountered when implementing inclusive education policies for children with disabilities in schools.

19. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that, having read the State party's law governing domestic workers, he had not found any reference to an age limit. He asked whether it was in fact prohibited for persons under a specific age to be employed as domestic workers and, if such rules were violated, what punishment would be imposed upon the perpetrator. He also wished to know whether non-national women in domestic service in Saudi Arabia were allowed to return to their home country to visit their children.

20. **Ms. Aho Assouma** (Country Task Force) said that she would appreciate more information on children working as jockeys in camel races. With regard to pregnancy, she asked whether pregnant women were permitted to attend medical consultations alone or whether they required authorization from their husband in order to do so. Was it true that doubts were cast on the unborn child's paternity if the father did not attend the medical consultation? She would like to know whether the State party intended to waive the fine imposed on parents for the late registration of their child's birth, whether abortion was permissible in cases of rape or incest, whether there had been any cases registered of obstetric fistula, what measures were in place to support girls who had fallen pregnant at a young age, what was being done to protect the rights of Bidoun who were considered stateless under the Citizenship Act, and what steps were being taken to tackle obesity. Obesity was a particular concern for girls who were not allowed to engage in sport or physical activity. She wondered whether the State party had any nutrition programmes in place in order to address the growing health issue.

21. **Mr. Al-Aiban** (Saudi Arabia) said that he would like to know the source of information claiming that a mother would lose her right to custody of her unborn child if she went to a medical screening alone while pregnant. No law could deprive a mother of such rights.

22. **Ms. Alosaimi** (Saudi Arabia) said that the certification of child-friendly hospitals was part of an international programme that trained medical professionals in paediatric care and important issues pertaining to infant health, such as breastfeeding. In order for a hospital to be certified as child-friendly, a number of criteria had to be met.

23. A central unit had been established within the Ministry of Health to address the problem of HIV/AIDS and to improve awareness of the disease among the general public. With regard to pregnancy, the father of an unborn child was not required to be present at the medical screening of a pregnant woman. Saudi Arabia was fully aware of its obesity issue and the Government had established a number of centres focusing on the promotion of health education and awareness of the dangers of obesity.

24. **Mr. Almdimegh** (Saudi Arabia) said that 30 centres had been set up to support children born out of wedlock and that laws were in place to provide for their care. The Ministry of Social Affairs offered financial assistance to NGOs working to protect such children. With regard to the nationality of children born out of wedlock, under the Citizenship Act, the Supreme Court ruled on a case by case basis. If the Saudi father of the child submitted proof of paternity, Saudi nationality was granted to the child.

25. Incarcerated pregnant women were provided with specialist medical care both during and after their pregnancy. After birth, the child was able to remain with his or her mother in certain quarters of the prison, taking into consideration the best interests of the child. Female prisoners were well separated from male prisoners. Mothers who gave birth to children while in prison were able to keep their children in their care throughout their lives. Rehabilitation centres had been established for such women.

26. Legislative measures had been taken to combat begging. Centres provided shelter and psychological care to beggars under the age of 18 years. The exploitation of children for the purpose of begging was considered a form of human trafficking and could be sanctioned by a prison sentence of up to 15 years.

27. **Mr. Al-Aiban** (Saudi Arabia) said that whether a foreign domestic worker was allowed to return to his or her country of origin for a given amount of time was dependent on the contract signed with his or her employer. Bilateral agreements also existed between countries sending domestic workers and those receiving domestic workers. According to the law, leave of one month was mandatory for domestic workers. Foreign domestic workers could return to their home country in that period subject to the provisions of their contracts. If employers prematurely terminated the contract of a domestic worker, they would be obliged to pay for the foreign worker's return to his or her country of origin. If disputes arose between domestic workers and their employers, the former were able to register their complaint before dispute resolution committees.

28. The imposition of fines was used as a means of awareness-raising. For instance, families that did not enrol their children into schools were fined because penalties needed to be imposed in cases where parents neglected their duties towards their children.

29. **Mr. Bin Nouh** (Saudi Arabia) said that juvenile defendants were guaranteed due process. The death penalty was confined to very extreme cases and could not be handed down until the case had been duly considered. The case first came before three judges in the first instance court. If the defendant was sentenced to death, the case was transferred to the court of appeal, where it was considered by five judges. The court of cassation would then review the result. If the ruling had not been changed at any stage of the process, the death penalty would be confirmed.

30. The appropriate treatment of juvenile offenders was guaranteed by law. Upon arrest, a child would be detained in a centre for juvenile offenders, which was affiliated to the Ministry of Social Affairs. All necessary medical and psychological assessments would be conducted and a full report would be handed to the juvenile court judge. The investigation would be conducted in the presence of the child's social worker.

31. Children were placed in the custody of their mothers until they were 7 years old. Requests for custody, visitation rights or alimony must be addressed within 24 hours and women could lodge requests at the nearest court. The Ministry of Justice had established a fund that made alimony payments for children whose fathers had failed to appear at court. Mothers were not restricted in their interactions with government agencies, and there were many female lawyers available, thanks to an agreement between the Ministry of Justice and the universities that admitted female law students.

32. **Mr. Alzouman** (Saudi Arabia) said that investigations into acts of violence were undertaken by a committee, and prosecutors could launch proceedings even if the victim did not lodge a complaint. The investigating committee could request more severe sanctions than those set out in the Criminal Code, which were a minimum of 2 months' imprisonment, a fine of 50,000 riyals, or both. Those sentences could be doubled for repeat offenders. Many cases of sexual abuse had been investigated, and between 2008 and 2016, at least 600 cases of attacks on children had been dealt with.

The meeting was suspended at 11.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.50 a.m.

33. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** asked how many children with disabilities received inclusive education, how many received specialist education and how children with intellectual disabilities were segregated. He asked what the minimum age for criminal sanctions for boys and girls was and requested clarification of the "appropriate" sanctions for crimes against children provided for by the Child Protection Act.

34. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** asked whether the death penalty was applied to minors or those who had been minors when they had committed their crime and what steps could be taken to avoid the prisoners on the list communicated to the delegation by the Committee the previous day being put to death.

35. **Ms. Aho Assouma** asked who decided which "appropriate" sanctions were applied to the perpetrators of crimes against children and how incest and sexual abuse within the family were punished. She requested statistics on those crimes.

36. **Ms. Sandberg** asked how many children had lodged complaints of violence in person, how many had done so through family members, how many investigations into those complaints had been opened and completed, how many court proceedings had been launched and how many convictions had been secured.

37. **Mr. Alotaibi** (Saudi Arabia) said that the Government had established a committee that coordinated all the bodies providing services to persons with disabilities. That committee comprised government agencies, associations of persons with disabilities, private sector representatives and civil society organizations.

38. **Mr. Bin Nouh** (Saudi Arabia) said that the death penalty was handed down only when a crime had been committed by an adult and when certain conditions had been fulfilled. Adults who had committed crimes as children were never sentenced to death. The facts pertaining to cases were verified at all levels of the judicial system before the death penalty was carried out.

39. **Ms. Sandberg** asked whether adults were defined as those older than 18; the Committee understood that the State party used a definition based on physical characteristics.

40. **The Chair** asked whether the State party believed that the persons included on the list had been aged 18 years or more when they had committed their crimes and how a person's age at the time of a crime was determined.

41. **Mr. Al-Aiban** (Saudi Arabia) said that a national committee had been convened to establish the facts surrounding the cases involving the individuals on the list and had cooperated with United Nations mechanisms in that regard. The normal standards and criteria applied to those cases. Those over the age of criminal liability, which was always 18, who committed *Qisas* offences were punished under sharia law, and pardons could only be granted by the victim's next of kin.

42. **Mr. Alzouman** (Saudi Arabia) said that children were prohibited from participating in dangerous entertainment or sports activities, such as camel races, and legal action could

be taken against those who employed children for such activities, which were supervised by committees.

43. **Ms. Alotaibi** (Saudi Arabia) said that while a 24-hour telephone line existed, the child helpline was operational for 16 hours every day. The line was part of the National Family Safety Programme, which created safe family environments through support, prevention, community awareness-raising and cooperation with the Government, NGOs and international organizations. The helpline allowed all children, regardless of nationality, to express their views, lodge complaints or obtain advice. It communicated complaints of abuse to the competent authorities in line with confidentiality regulations.

44. Furthermore, there was another telephone line that provided counselling through female psychosocial experts who had received training on the Convention; 21 per cent of its calls related to violence. Medical abuse was dealt with by multidisciplinary teams, and between 2011 and 2016 more than 1,500 cases had been detected and referred to the prosecutor.

45. **Mr. Alalmaey** (Saudi Arabia) said that all children, regardless of gender, were entitled to free education, and parents who prevented their children from attending school were deemed to have committed abuse and could be prosecuted. Education was mandatory for children aged between 6 and 15, whether they were citizens of Saudi Arabia or not, and children could enrol in schools even without identity documents. The Ministry of Education combated dropout at all levels of education. There were also opportunities for male and female students to study abroad.

46. Educational opportunities were provided for persons with disabilities through a range of policies and programmes. Services were provided to children with disabilities who lived far from the main specialist education centres. There was also a programme that integrated children with disabilities into mainstream schools, along with specialized curricula. Education facilities were physically accessible and the State provided free prosthetics, books in Braille and other assistive devices. Schools employed teachers who had received training in education for persons with disabilities, and accommodation was provided for those without suitable education establishments near their homes. All children with disabilities received a monthly stipend, along with psychological and medical assessments and other services.

47. **Mr. Bin Nouh** (Saudi Arabia) said that there were severe punishments for sexual abuse under sharia law, which viewed the abuse of a child as an aggravating circumstance. The Child Protection Act also provided for fines and imprisonment for such acts.

48. **Mr. Al-Aiban** (Saudi Arabia) said that while there was no dress code in the State party, women must be dressed decently in public, a requirement that was in line with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

49. **Mr. Alghamadi** (Saudi Arabia) said that domestic legislation provided for freedom of expression for all, and children had been involved in drawing up the National Strategy for Children. Other efforts in that area included interactive education to strengthen children's critical thinking skills, as well as activities organized by the King Abdulaziz Centre for National Dialogue, which advised government departments on the matter. Children had opportunities to improve their skills with the aid of special magazines and radio and television programmes.

50. **Mr. Al-Aiban** (Saudi Arabia) said that Saudi Arabia had been involved in efforts to promote cultural tolerance among children both domestically and abroad.

51. **Mr. Aldakkan** (Saudi Arabia) said that there were no religious minorities to discriminate against in Saudi Arabia. The Government promoted a moderate version of

Islam, and imams and schoolteachers were encouraged to reject intolerance. The school dress code imposed by the Government applied only to Saudi students at public schools; non-Saudi students at private schools were not subject to it.

52. **Mr. Almubark** (Saudi Arabia) said that as a result of the generous provisions of the Saudi Citizenship Act, there was no statelessness in Saudi Arabia.

53. **Mr. Alghorri** (Saudi Arabia) said that non-Saudi children had the same rights as their Saudi peers. Under Saudi labour law, employers with more than 50 employees were required to set up day-care centres. In addition, women could not be employed for six weeks after giving birth.

54. **Ms. Alturki** (Saudi Arabia) said that the National Human Rights Commission had organized numerous human rights training courses or seminars for judges, prosecutors and other relevant officials. Academic conferences and seminars had been held as part of the Family Safety Programme, and the officials from the judiciary and the Ministry of the Interior had received special training on how to deal with cases of violence against children. More than 3,500 teachers had taken part in courses on recognizing the early signs of child abuse.

55. Cooperation with civil society involved in the development of human rights programmes was extensive. NGOs had taken part, for example, in the drafting of the reports produced in advance of the universal periodic review. The National Society for Human Rights produced reports describing a number of human rights violations. In general, it was in an attempt to strengthen the non-governmental sector that NGOs were regulated.

56. **Ms. Al Saleh** (Saudi Arabia) said that all relevant Saudi legislation, including that governing the child protection system, was regularly reviewed to ensure that it incorporated the principle of the best interests of the child. In all matters concerning children, their best interests were a primary consideration.

57. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** said that the Committee would welcome answers to a number of questions that had been posed earlier. It would be interesting to know more, for example, about the budgets for programmes focusing on children, about the efforts made to collect data specifically relating to children and about a number of specific cases involving the detention of NGO personnel devoted to the defence of girls' rights. Other questions that had not been fully addressed included those about the determination of the penalties for crimes against children and the fate of institutionalized children, especially girls, after they reached the age of 12. Did they continue going to school?

58. **Ms. Sandberg** wondered whether she had understood correctly that children aged 15 or older could be given sentences that involved stoning, flogging or amputation. She also wondered how the authorities ensured that children under 18 were not tortured.

59. **Mr. Guráň** (Country Task Force) said that he would welcome information about the efforts made by the State party to take children out of residential institutions and place them in family environments. He would also welcome a comment from the delegation on the status of the National Human Rights Commission. Was it fully in line with the Paris Principles?

60. **Mr. Al-Aiban** (Saudi Arabia) said that the National Human Rights Commission was fully independent. The regulations governing its operations had been amended to ensure that it reported directly to the King. The State encouraged civil society to monitor the human rights situation in the country and report any violations committed by public officials.

61. **Mr. Almdimegh** (Saudi Arabia) said that children who were deprived of a family environment were entitled to alternative care provided either by foster families or social

welfare institutions. Children were placed in institutions only as a last resort. Even in institutions, however, efforts were made to recreate a family or community environment. Children placed in institutions were entitled to educational services on an equal basis with other children.

62. **Mr. Al-Aiban** (Saudi Arabia) said that the boys and girls under the protection of the social services were encouraged to pursue their education as far as possible. They were even entitled to full scholarships to pursue higher education abroad. Female guides and social workers prepared girls for practical and married life.

63. **Mr. Alzouman** (Saudi Arabia) said that the provisions of Saudi law stipulated that children were not to be subjected to physical or psychological torture. Torture had been penalized since the unification of Saudi Arabia. The specific penalties were laid out in Royal Decree No. 43.

64. Juveniles in conflict with the law were accorded special treatment. By law, for instance, they were not to be held in institutions other than those specifically designed for them, where they had access to social workers. Their cases were dealt with by juvenile judges. All persons involved in handling such cases, including the police, were required to wear civilian clothes while on duty, and under no circumstances were minors to be handcuffed. Detained minors were examined by doctors, and a full report on their psychological condition was to be submitted to the court before trial.

65. **Mr. Cardona Llorens**, stressing that the Committee was concerned solely about the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, said that dialogues with delegations of States parties were not always easy, as the delegations generally wished to highlight their achievements, while Committee members were keen to use the limited time available to them to focus on areas that needed improvement. It was clear that matters had improved in Saudi Arabia, but as Committee members prepared the recommendations that they would make to the State party, they would inevitably wonder whether the authorities' attempts to protect girls in particular were not excessive. Children were not just objects to be protected, and donations to children's organizations, while welcome, were not sufficient. Children were full citizens, and their rights should be promoted.

66. **Mr. Al-Aiban** (Saudi Arabia) said that the King of Saudi Arabia had set the tone for the considerable efforts made by the country to protect and promote children's rights. He assured Committee members that their recommendations would be acted upon.

67. **The Chair** said that additional responses to questions that had not been fully answered, submitted in writing within 48 hours, would enable the Committee to make more detailed recommendations.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.